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DE RUEHSB #1135 3541050
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3847

UNCLAS HARARE 001135

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B. WALCH
S/CT FOR RHONDA SHORE AND NCTC
NCTC: RUEILB/NCTC WASHINGTON DC

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE: 2008 COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM
REF: STATE 120019

¶1. (U) Despite the Government of Zimbabwe's self-imposed isolation on most diplomatic issues, local intelligence and criminal investigative agencies were responsive to our counterterrorism needs. Government agencies routinely provided assistance by conducting investigative inquiries, traces, and border checks of individuals thought to be threats to USG facilities or personnel. However, Zimbabwe's continued economic decline has had a detrimental impact on local law enforcement and national security elements that are responsible for implementing and coordinating counterterrorism efforts.

¶2. (U) Although generally cooperative, the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) in October suspended armed police coverage of the Embassy and USAID compounds in Harare. Attempts to enter into a dialogue with the ZRP and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to resolve the issue have proven unsuccessful.

¶3. (U) The Suppression of Foreign and International Terrorism Bill, enacted in August 2007 to combat terrorism and mercenary activities in Zimbabwe, has been redirected to suppress the political opposition. Between late October and early November, 15 members of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party were abducted and held incommunicado on allegations of receiving training in terrorism, sabotage, and banditry in Botswana. An additional 15 MDC and civil society members have since been abducted by armed, plainclothes men. The ZRP has denied holding any of the abductees.

¶4. (U) EMBASSY POC: ANDREW SCHUT (schutah@state.gov).

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